

## EXHIBITION REVIEW OF

### BEATRIZ CORTEZ: TRINIDAD/ JOY STATION Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles

BY JP FRANCIS



Beatriz Cortez' first major museum solo exhibition, *Trinidad/Joy Station*, explores the binary between consumerist American culture and communal social practices of ancient Mayan civilization. The show at the newly renamed Craft Contemporary (formerly known as the Craft and Folk Art Museum) in Los Angeles explores Cortez's own experience of transition from her native El Salvador to the United States and the differences in societal structures between the two countries.



The show consists of objects made from sheet metal and industrial materials to provide a biting critique of capitalistic American society in comparison to Cortez's utopian vision of communal Mayan culture.

Some of the exhibition's signature pieces, Cortez's geodesic metal domes, allude to a 1960s Colorado commune called "Drop City," which sought to merge art and life in the pursuit of true freedom.



Upward-facing windows within the sculptures reference the astrological principles of Mayans, whose descendants reside in modern-day El Salvador. This parallel is further established through Cortez's use of Mayan plants in a gardening installation, which sits in the center of the exhibition.

Cortez also uses sheet metal, chain-link, and Mylar to create two beds, which sit next to each other in the exhibition's corner. The first bed is a prison-style cot which alludes to the separation of children from their families at the US-Mexico border, while the second is a *petate*, a traditional sleeping mat used by Central-American indigenous peoples.

The two sleeping surfaces juxtapose oppressive modern values perpetrated by a capitalistic political structure with the classical simplicity and collective compassion of indigenous people.

The exhibition displays Cortez's ultimate goal of resisting capitalistic hierarchies through the expression of joy and celebration of past, present, and future Latin-American culture. *Trinidad/Joy Station* will be on view at CAFAM, 5814 Wilshire Boulevard until May 12.

View the press release for *Trinidad/Joy Station* [here](#).

See more of Beatriz Cortez's work [here](#).

